(b) if so, the details thereof for the last three years; year-wise;

(c) whether any improvement has been noticed in controlling the animal diseases in the State; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central funds released to the State of Maharashtra for the control of animal diseases during the last three years is as follows:

Year	Amount (Rs. in lakhs)
1995-96	59.31
1996-97	54.74
1997-98	86.46

(c) and (d) Yes Sir. Rinderpest disease, which had last occurred in the State in October, 1993 has been totally eradicated. There has been perceptible improvement in the disease status in terms of number of outbreaks/number of animals dead etc. with regard to economically important diseases like Haemorrhagic Septicaemia, Antorax, Black Quarter, Blue Tongue etc. The infrastructural facilities in the State for animal disease control have also been strengthened considerably.

Promotion of Agro-Forestry

4004. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to promote agro-forestry and orchard units in the country, particularly in Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) No specific and exclusive programme is being implemented for the promotion of agro-forestry in the country and particularly in the State of Assam. However, agro-forestry is one of the biological measure being advocated for the development of wastelands depending upon the location of the watersheds. The Indian Council of Aricultural Research is implementing an All India Coordinated Research Project on Agro-forestry in the country. For Assam, this is being implemented through the Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat. The Government is implementing a Central Sector Scheme on Development of Tropical, Temperate and Arid Zone Fruits under which assistance is being provided for increasing the production and productivity of various fruit crops through measures such as supply of quality planting material, rejuvenation of senile orchards, training of farmers besides area expansion. The scheme is being implemented in all the States of the country including Assam.

Decline in Kharif Production

4005. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Kharif crop production has come down to 103.5 million tonnes against the targeted 105.5 million tonnes;

(b) whether it is also a fact that one of the reasons for the decline in the Kharif crop production was on account of low Kharif crop coverage this year which came down by 4.1 per cent; and

(c) what are the strategies being considered to enhance the rabi crop production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The production of Kharif foodgrains for 1997-98 is estimated at 103.7 million tonnes against the target of 105.5 million tonnes.

(b) Decline in Kharif crop production during 1997-98 is largely attributed to lower Kharif crop acreage by 1.6% as compared to 1996-97.

(c) The strategies adopted for increasing the Rabi crop production include the emphasis for timely planting/seeding, increasing the area coverage under high yielding varieties/hybrids, balanced use of fertilisers, ensuring irrigation